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**THE ROLE OF AGENTIC AND COMMUNAL  
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# The Role of Agentic and Communal Values in the Individuals' Outcomes of Job Related Affective Well Being and Political Deviance

Seçil BAL TAŞTAN<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

*The purpose of the study is to investigate the relationships between agentic and communal values, job related affective well-being, and political deviance. An empirical study was performed in Turkey among the health care staff working in five health care organizations. The findings supported the reasoning of the study: Positive associations of communal values with job related affective well-being and agentic values with political deviance were found. In addition, negative association between communal values and political deviance was reported. In contrast to the suggestions of this study, a positive association between agentic values and affective wellbeing was found. The research results were evaluated with their conceptual implications.*

## Keywords:

*Values, agency and communion, agentic and communal values, counterproductive work behaviours, political deviance, job related affective well-being.*

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## **Introduction**

Well-being is an important positive psychology subject that has been examined in recent studies. Counter Productive Work Behaviours (CWB) are the critical employee behaviours that are categorized under the negative work behaviours in the organizations. In this study, it was suggested that as core self-values, agentic and communal values would be related with individuals' positive and negative outcomes of job related affective well-being and political deviance at work. For testing the suggestions, a research study was performed among health care staff in Turkey.

## **Literature review and hypotheses**

### **1.1. Job related affective wellbeing**

In most theoretical models, general affective well-being has been conceptualized as the level of pleasure and activation (Gonçalves and Neves, 2011: 706) and described the subjective estimation of whether a person is feeling well or unwell (Warr, 1990). Diener, Lucas, Smith and Suh (1999: 277) argued subjective well-being to be “a broad category of phenomena that includes people’s emotional responses, domain satisfactions, and global judgments of life satisfaction”. Psychological well-being is defined by Robertson and Cooper (2011: 54) as the “affective and purposive psychological state that people experience while they are at work”. Warr (1990) adopted affective well-being into work setting and employees. In practice affective psychological state indicated whether individuals feel good or not at work (Robertson and Cooper, 2011). Warr (1990, 1994) developed a two dimensional model based on emotional states. The first factor was anxiety-comfort represented by tense, uneasy, worried, calm, contented and relaxed items. Depressed, gloomy, miserable, cheerful, enthusiastic and optimistic items were representing depression-enthusiasm as the second factor (Warr, 1990). A number of studies have applied the approach of Warr to the work context (Warr, Bindl, Parker and Inceoglu, 2014; Basińska, Gruszczyńska and Schafuli, 2014).

### **1.2. Political deviance**

CWBs are the critical employee behaviors that shape the intention to harm the organization or the members and categorized under the negative work behaviors in the organizations (Bennett and

Robinson, 2000). CWB is basically a voluntary or intentional behavior that could negatively impact the interest of the organization either directly or indirectly by hurting the employees which resultantly reduces their effectiveness (McShane and Glinow, 2005). Based on Bennett and Robinson' (2000) four-class typology, CWBs were described with the components of production deviance (involving behaviors like leaving early, intentionally working slow, or taking long breaks); property deviance (involving sabotage of equipment, theft of property, and taking kickbacks); political deviance (involving showing favoritism, gossiping, or blaming others); and personal aggression (involving harassment, verbal abuse, and endangerment). In this study, following the conceptualization of Robinson and Bennett (2000), the political deviance sub dimension of CWBs was investigated.

### **1.3. Agentic and Communal Values**

This study's focus was on the value level and here values were defined as cognitive representations of basic motives, specifying a culture's conception of what is important and socially desirable, and guiding goals and the evaluations of the events and other individuals (Schwartz and Bilsky, 1990; Trapnell and Paulhus, 2012). Values are described as cognitive representations of basic motives or stable life goals that are important to individuals in their lives and guide their perception, judgments, attitudes, and behaviors (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992). Thus, values are motivational forces that influence goals and the direction of behavior. As Abele (2014: 2) has indicated, individuals may hold many different values implicating many different traits (i.e., concepts of the self). It was recognized that this variety was categorized into classes of traits and values using as framework the A and C distinction. By dint of his methodology, Schwartz (1992) induced an inherent antagonism between agentic and communal values: They are contrasted on one bipolar dimension, self-enhancement (agency) versus selftranscendence (communion). The distinction between agency (A) and communion (C) values is among the most influential pairings of content in psychology and behavioural sciences. Bakan (1966) pioneered those conceptual labels and provided an effective framework for distinguishing and organizing two broad aspects of human values, motives, traits, and behavior (Paulhus and John, 1998; Abele and Wojciszke, 2014). A and C values have been examined in contemporary individual differences

research by a number of scholars. Abele and Wojciszke (2007) stated that agency and communion constitute two separate clusters of meaning and reflected the two recurring challenges of human life – pursuing individual goals and being a member of social groups and relationships. Wiggins, Trapnell and Phillips (1988) described the theoretical distinctions between A & C and Wiggins (1991) addressed the evolution of those values by emphasizing gender roles, language, and religion factors. Hogan (1982) framed his socioanalytic theory around the distinction of A & C and labelled the two primary human motives as “getting along” and “getting ahead”. Trapnell and Paulhus (2012: 39) have found a judgement on the conceptualization of Hogan (1982). Accordingly, agentic values referred to qualities relevant for goal-attainment, such as assertiveness, competence, or persistence which was labeled as "getting ahead" and communal values referred to qualities relevant for the establishment and maintenance of social relationships, such as being friendly, helpful, or fair which was labelled as "getting along" by Hogan (1982). Those same implications are also relevant for individual differences within a culture (Trapnell and Paulhus, 2012: 39). Therefore, in the literature, A and C values have been investigated both in national level and individual level analyses. In this study, after documenting the literature evidences and theoretical framework, A and C values were analysed in the individual level.

#### **1.4 The roles of A&C values on political deviance and job related well being**

As a conceptual framework A and C values have been applied to various contexts and concepts related to culture, personality, organizational behavioral, and managerial studies. This framework had a role in recent studies investigating self-enhancement (Paulhus and John, 1998), behavior analysis (Moskowitz and Zuroff, 2005), personality (Gurtman and Pincus, 2003), action identification (Vallacher and Wegner, 1989), cognitive complexity (Woike, 1994), social identity (McGregor and Little, 1998), self-presentation (Paulhus and Trapnell, 2008), motivation and adjustment (Hernandez and Iyengar, 2001; Walls and Little, 2005) and job satisfaction (Abele, 2014). These basic values are deeply linked to personality and self-concept and connected to the socialization process. As Abele and Wojciszke (2007) mentioned, indeed, self-ratings on A and C values describe a number of individual

intentional and behavioral outcomes. Hofer, Chasiotis and Campos (2006) indicated that C values which presented interpersonal relations were associated with life satisfaction, whereas A values in the domain of power were independent of life satisfaction. C values were found to be positively correlated with helping and citizenship behaviors in the organizations (Abele, 2014). Akin, Dunn and Norton (2012) found that individuals having C values engaged in collaborative behaviors and C values mainly enhanced an individual's well-being. Previous research showed positive relationship between C values and positive social relationships and satisfaction (Diener and Biswas-Diener, 2008). Abele (2014) has reported that individuals having C values had greater life satisfaction than positive relations with other than the individuals having A values. However, as a different finding, Helgeson (1994) found that A values were associated with reduced depression, anxiety, and health complaints; whereas C values showed less associations with well-being. Similarly, it was showed that A values were linked with variables that were related with life satisfaction (Çivitçi and Çivitçi, 2009; Kong, Ding and Zhao, 2014), such as, self-esteem and self-efficacy beliefs (Abele, 2003). On the other hand, studies show that A traits predicted success, achievement, assertive actions, political behaviors, and competence in an individual's occupational career (Abele, 2003; Abele and Spurk, 2011). A values instigate behavior which is success-oriented and leads to actual to success (Abele, 2014: 4). Abele (2014) has indicated that there was a positive associations of C values with life satisfaction and well-being in their lives. Thus, previous research showed different results in terms of the A and C values and their associates with well-being. The research on job-related well-being indicators addressed the predictable antecedents combining individual (values, personality, self-perception, etc.) and organizational/contextual (managerial factors, coworker relations, work climate, work demands, etc.) variables (Totterdell, Wood and Wall, 2006). As further, personal agency assumed that individuals will both perceive themselves as the origins of their own behavior and be motivated to act upon opportunities that allow one to be the sole initiator of their behavior which might predict destructive behaviors (Hernandez and Iyengar, 2001: 271). It has been argued that individuals with A values strived more for primary control over their environment (Weisz, Rothbaum and Blackburn, 1984), thus in turn may have tendency to engage in self-centered behaviors reflecting their self-interests

(Hernandez and Iyengar, 2001). By contrast, Markus and Kitayama (1991) stated that interdependent-selves perceive themselves as striving for harmony and belongingness with others, which in turn enhances cooperative behaviors. In addition, Walls and Little (2005) argued that individual with agentic values seeked personally accessible and usable means and relations in pursuing their goals.

In sum, it was suggested that as core self-values, A and C values would be related with individuals' positive and negative outcomes of job related affective well-being and political deviance at work. In elaborating on the theories of self-construal (Markus and Kitayama, 1991), values (Schwartz, 1992) and A & C values (Trapnell and Paulhus, 2012) and drawing on past research on cultural psychology (Hernandez and Iyengar, 2001; Hofer et al., 2006), it was proposed that individuals who were more personally agentic stressed independence, whereas individuals who were high in communal values stressed interdependence. Specifically, it was hypothesized that A values would exhibit greater intrinsic motivation toward actions perceived as self-initiated and C values would exhibit greater intrinsic motivation toward attitudes and behaviors which would enhance collective interest. Both the higher appreciation of C values in many cultures and research on the pursuit of intrinsic versus extrinsic goals suggests that C values were more strongly related to life satisfaction and well-being than A values (Abele, 2014). In support to the previous arguments, the hypotheses of this study are suggested as follows:

H1: Agentic values are positively related with political deviant behaviors.

H2: Agentic values are negatively related with job related affective well-being.

H3: Communal values are negatively related with political deviant behaviors.

H4: Communal values are positively related with job related affective well-being.

## **Method**

### **2.1. Sample and data collection**

An empirical study was performed in Turkey among the health care staff working in five health care organizations. A structured questionnaire survey method was designed in order to test the suggested

relationships. The data was collected with personal interviews and online questionnaire forms between July 2014 and February 2015. Data obtained from questionnaires were analysed through SPSS statistical packet program and LISREL.

## 2.2. Measuring instruments

Within the survey, the sub-scale of Bannet and Robinson's (2000) 29 items CWB scale was used to measure political deviance. Political deviance scale has been labelled as interpersonal deviance measuring favouritism, gossiping, and blaming behaviors with 7 items. Agentic and communal values were evaluated with a scale constructed by Trapnell and Paulhus (2012) composed of 12 items per each values (totally 24 items). Job-related affective well-being was measured with the 12 items scale of Warr (1990). Each of the sub scales composed of 3 items (anxiety, comfort, depression and enthusiasm) and the reverse items were recoded within the analysis. The respondents were asked to rate the items on Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 6 (totally agree).

## 2.3. Reliability and validity analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to ensure the distinctness of the values, affective wellbeing and political deviance scales. Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) was utilized and all the scales showed good reliability of over .70 (Table 1). CFA results of the variables reported good fitness of the models, indicating that the selected indicators were good representatives of the research variables (Table 2).

**Table 1.** The summary statistics of variables

Factors	Number of questions	Mean	$\alpha$
<b>Political deviance</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4.8861</b>	<b>0.83</b>
Anxiety	3	3.9521	0.85
Comfort	3	3.1288	0.81
Depression	3	3.6625	0.79
Enthusiasm	3	3.2163	0.82
<b>Job related affective wellbeing</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3.5215</b>	<b>0.82</b>
<b>Agentic values</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3.0407</b>	<b>0.88</b>
<b>Communal values</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4.5225</b>	<b>0.84</b>

**Table 2.** Fitness indices of research variables based on CFA

<b>Fitness indices</b>	<b>Political deviance</b>	<b>J.R. aff. wellbeing</b>	<b>Agentic values</b>	<b>Communal values</b>	<b>Principle</b>
Chi-square/df	2.5263	2.2856	2.3677	2.7266	< 3
P-value	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	< 0.05
RMSEA	0.067	0.062	0.063	0.076	< 0.10
GFI	0.98	0.95	0.97	0.94	> 0.9
AGFI	0.91	0.94	0.95	0.90	> 0.9

## 2.4. Test of hypotheses

In order to test the above hypotheses, Pearson's Correlation Analysis was applied (all variables centered) (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Correlation Analysis (n: 255;  $p < 0.05$ )

		<b>Agentic</b>	<b>Communal</b>	<b>Wellbeing</b>	<b>Pol. deviance</b>
<b>Agentic</b>	<i>r</i>	1	0.018	0.443	0.547
	<i>p</i>	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.000
<b>Communal</b>	<i>r</i>	0.018	1	0.236	-0.292
	<i>p</i>	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.002
<b>Wellbeing</b>	<i>r</i>	0.443	0.236	1	-0.195
	<i>p</i>	0.002	0.001	0.000	0.003
<b>Pol.deviance</b>	<i>r</i>	0.547	0.292	-0.195	1
	<i>p</i>	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.002

The correlation analysis results reported that agentic values had moderate positive relationship with job related affective well-being ( $r=0.443$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and moderate positive relationship with political deviance ( $r=0.547$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Moreover, communal values had weak positive relationship with job related affective well-being ( $r=0.236$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and weak negative relationship with political deviance ( $r=-0.292$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). All variables of the model had significant associations among each other. The documented results indicated that H1, H3 and H4 were supported. However, H2 which has suggested a negative relationship between agentic values and job related affective well-being was not supported since a significant moderate positive relation was reported. As

further, the regression model was found to be significant for the research model ( $F=83.772$ ;  $p<0.05$ ); communal values explained 36% ( $\beta:0.455$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and agentic values explained 26% ( $\beta:0.326$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) of the change in job related affective well-being. In addition, agentic values explained 39% ( $\beta:0.541$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and communal values explained 9% ( $\beta:-0.262$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) of the change in political deviance.

### **Conclusion and Discussion**

On review of the relevant literature, some hints were found regarding the potential associates of agentic and communal values to political deviance and job related affective well-being. That means, the nature of values and two distinct values as perceived in psychological levels such as agentic and communal values were related with both positive and negative individual outcomes such as well-being and political deviance. CFA results of the variables showed good fitness of the models and indicated that the items were good representatives of the variables in the research model. The reliability values of the research instruments were high showing the overall reliability of the research scales. The descriptive results showed that the magnitude of political deviance was 4.886 and the magnitude of job related affective well-being was 3.521 among the health care staff. It is found that health care staff were more politically deviant and they reported a medium level of affective well-being. On the other hand, the mean score of communal values in the sample group was 4.522 which represented a high level of communal values. The hypotheses test results reported moderate positive relationship between agentic values and job related affective well-being which indicated that H2 was not supported. Based on the previous works, it was suggested that agentic values would lead individuals to be self-oriented and to construct rational relationship. Thus, it was expected that the individuals with agentic values would not show affective well-being in their jobs. In contrast to the suggestions of this study, individuals having agentic values had higher level of job related affective well-being than the individuals having communal values. Moreover, it was found that agentic values were positively related with political deviance and communal values had negative relation with political deviance.

These results supported the suggested hypotheses of the study and the suggestions of the previous studies (Abele and Wojciszke, 2007;

Abele, 2014). As the previous evidences have indicated, communal values were positively linked to individuals' affective well-being and negatively linked to political deviance. The findings of this study were consistent with the literature and the conceptual arguments which suggested that communal values lead to better satisfaction and well-being, whereas agentic value lead to higher destructive behaviours and self-concerns (Diener and Biswas-Diener, 2008; Abele, 2014). On the other side, this study has revealed a different finding in terms of the agentic value and well-being association. Hofer et al. (2006) addresses that agentic values in the domain of power would be independent of satisfaction and well-being. It was seen that agentic individuals were associated with affective well-being even they stress the power and independency. The present findings of this study are similar with Helgeson's (1994) study which found that agentic values were associated with reduced depression and high well-being. Moreover, these findings also supported the implications of Civitci and Civitci (2009) and Kong et al. (2014) who argued on positive links between agentic values and life satisfaction. Therefore, the present study's results should be evaluated with the cultural aspects and with other individual, situational and organizational factors influencing the relationship between agentic values and affective well-being. The findings of this study may contribute to the literature and the works on cultural psychology, values, counterproductive behaviours and positive organizational behaviour. As a limitation, it is suggested that the sample size should be larger in order to enable better generalizability of the findings.

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